

January 2012 No 22

**ON
TRACK
OFF
ROAD**





Done in two...

Of the three rounds, stadiums and two states visited in the AMA Supercross seasons so far (100,000 fans seeing the races already) the standout victory from the three different winners to-date has to be Ryan Dungey's landmark success for KTM and their new 450SX-F. The 22 year old controlled proceedings at Phoenix and gave the Austrians their maiden triumph in the SX class only two races into his two year career stint wearing orange

Photo by Ray Archer



AMA-MX







AMA-MX

Supercross mecca...

Continuing the heavy Supercross theme of this issue the downtown illumination and activity in Los Angeles was the perfect backdrop for a dramatic night at Dodger Stadium and the latest contest in what is sure to be a drawn-out and entirely engaging AMA campaign

Photo by Ray Archer





AMA-MX

Under the bright lights...

2011 winner extraordinaire Ryan Villopoto is not usually this close to the lights for his 'day' job but the busy Monster Energy Kawasaki rider took some time out from his punishing schedule to pose for Ray Archer's camera and chat a little about the demands of a 29 race Supercross-Motocross season. Go to the interview and see more photos by clicking [here](#)

Photo by Ray Archer





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ONE REASON

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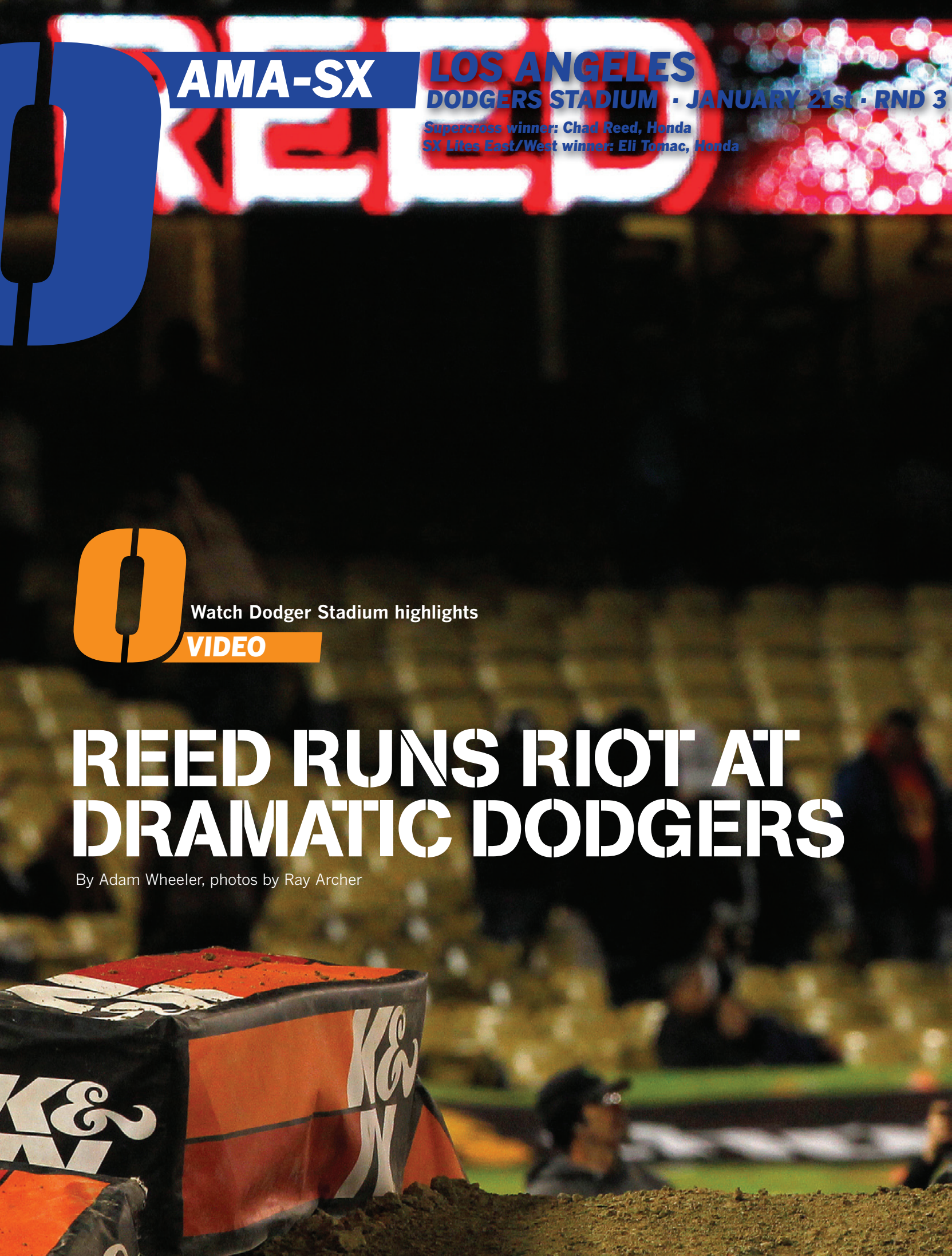
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AMA-SX

LOS ANGELES

DODGERS STADIUM • JANUARY 21st • RND 3

Supercross winner: Chad Reed, Honda

SX Lites East/West winner: Eli Tomac, Honda



Watch Dodger Stadium highlights

VIDEO

REED RUNS RIOT AT DRAMATIC DODGERS

By Adam Wheeler, photos by Ray Archer





Villopoto is helped off the Tuff Block and sets about another chase through the pack



Chad Reed didn't really look capable of matching Ryan Villopoto, James Stewart or Ryan Dungey in the initial phases of the AMA series but the fourth member of the star-quartet of Supercross quickly placed his title credentials on the table around a fast, dusty, slippery and cold Dodgers Stadium.

The TwoTwo Motorsports Bel-Ray Honda rider became the third different winner in three

events and the final podium of Reed, Ryan Dungey (now Mr 100% in terms of podium appearances) and James Stewart (on the box for the first time with JGR) owed as much to the twists and turns of an evening that is bound to be a on-going theme in this seventeen round championship chase. Stewart and Villopoto again fell victim of misfortune; the latter running off the track and restarting from last and the former dropping



Stewart practice lap

VIDEO

Stewart didn't have the edge that he demonstrated in Phoenix but was pushing Reed for the win until his mistake



RCROSSON

the Yamaha after a rough landing exiting the timing section. Their third and fourth positions respectively were earned in the absence of the ultimately luckless Trey Canard. The American Honda rider was landed upon by Ryan Morais and after a scarily long period of treatment trackside that forced the race to be stopped and Villopoto's lead to evaporate, Canard was taken to the medical centre where he was diagnosed with two fractured vertebrae and

due another period of convalescence. Morais ended up with a busted jaw and four broken vertebrae. It's quite a while since the dangers of pack racing in supercross have been more clearly highlighted.

The restart was unkind to Villopoto, and Stewart was equally harsh to Jake Weimer with a sketchy block pass for second position that put the Kawasaki man on the floor.



3 out of 3 for Dunkley and the consistency game might just win him the 2012 title

Stewart – roundly booed and even more so after his tough manoeuvre – looked to be threatening Reed’s lead but his mistake (his third in a row) gave the Australian breathing room over Dunkley. On the podium Reed managed to express concern for both Canard and Morais, who had both been carted away in full view of

the depleted gate, but in the same interview lambasted the antics of some of the field who he described as ‘nutters’ and professed he was happier with his second start because he wasn’t down in the pack. Dunkley claimed the red plate as series leader outright as Villopoto managed a gallant fourth in what was a busy



Second Lites win for Honda and like the SX class three different riders have now tasted West Coast glory. Tomac was untouchable in LA

20 laps of overtaking and unfailingly impressive speed. Stewart cited that more work on the set-up of his YZ450F was necessary and didn't refer to the Weimer incident. Neither did the victim himself as he picked up his thousand dollar cheque for the holeshot; although his facial expression told the full story.

The Lites was the domain of an unstoppable Eli Tomac (already from the Heats) from Dean Wilson and the ever-improving Zach Osborne who made the podium for the first time in his career and after four years on the European Grand Prix scene.

Now fifty years old Dodger Stadium was showing its age but was a spacious venue for only the second visit of the AMA series to this site in Los Angeles





Watch Dodger Stadium post show

VIDEO





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Osborne had been getting faster and faster and his first Lites podium in three of four 'warm-up' appearances for the MX2 GP season was well deserved







Watch Chad Reed interview

VIDEO

CANARD FACES ANOTHER SETBACK AFTER LA SMASH

Trey Canard – one of the riders expected to trouble the ‘top four’ this season - is going through another injury mire and if there is a guy who embodies the notion of ‘ill fortune’ on the current Supercross circuit then the rider from Oklahoma must have run over a black cat.

In Los Angeles – Canard’s second race back after he missed round one with a broken collarbone suffered in the off-season – his bad luck really did have a lot to do with extreme circumstances of fate. Luck, as in chance. He got a Tuff-Block cover hung up on his peg before the triple on the first lap, and he wasn’t able to jump it. The bad luck came when he

doubled the triple, accelerated up the third jump, and then more or less jumped right into the bottom of Ryan Morais, who was coming down to complete the triple. The collision was horrendous, and Morais was taken away with a broken jaw and a pretty serious concussion, while Canard came out of it with his own pretty gnarly concussion and two fractured vertebrae in his back (T-10 and T-12).

Needless to say, they’ll both be out a while, and Canard for much longer. It’s too early to say exactly how long Canard will be on the sidelines, but with an injury like this, it could actually be 2013 before we see him back on a race track.



Watch Canard/Morais crash
VIDEO



100% GEARING UP FOR SPRING SHIPPING

100% has the iconic value and the style of a brand embedded in the tradition of motocross and racing. Equally as important it also has the brains and creativity of the duo behind the formation and emergence of stick, helmet and casualwear behemoth One Industries, Ludo Boinnard and Marc Blanchard. OTOR featured a news update on the new company, based in the French duo's home city of San Diego, two issues ago but after a visit to the office last week can reveal a little more about the firm's path ahead.

"100% is a brand that has been underground and entrenched in motocross Americana and everybody was excited about it," said Boinnard. "We were looking for a direction with it and the thing that is the closest to the soul of the rider is the goggles and we wanted to do something independent. We have gone for quality and uniqueness. We hired the right people to make something that looks different and works

differently with the right distribution. We see some opportunities and have some ideas. It is a real motocross goggle brand and we are very happy with it."

100% unveiled their eyewear at Anaheim three weeks ago and after confirming distribution deals with Parts Unlimited for the American market and Parts Europe for select European territories are pushing onwards. Aside from the validity of the products themselves the hook surrounding 100% will be the interest in charting how the entrepreneurs will fare with their latest project. 100% athletes include Justin Brayton, Chris Blose and PJ Larsen within the Supercross arenas, the Bud Kawasaki crew in the FIM Motocross World Championship as well as a French factory rider in the premier MX1 class that will very soon be announced. For more info on 100% check out: www.ride-100percent.com and look out for a feature on the company in OTOR soon.





AMA-SX CLASSIFICATION & CHAMPIONSHIP

AMA SUPERCROSS RESULT

Riders

1	Chad Reed, AUS	Honda
2	Ryan Dungey, USA	KTM
3	James Stewart, USA	Yamaha
4	Ryan Villopoto, USA	Kawasaki
5	Brett Metcalfe, AUS	Suzuki

AMA SUPERCROSS LITES WEST COAST RESULT

Riders

1	Eli Tomac, USA	Honda
2	Dean Wilson, GBR	Kawasaki
3	Zach Osborne, USA	Yamaha
4	Tyla Rattray, RSA	Kawasaki
5	Jason Anderson, USA	Suzuki

AMA SUPERCROSS STANDINGS (AFTER 3 OF 17 ROUNDS)

Riders	Points
1 Ryan Dungey	067
2 Chad Reed	063
3 Ryan Villopoto	063
4 Jake Weimer	048
5 James Stewart	048

AMA SUPERCROSS LITES WEST STANDINGS

Riders	Points
1 Eli Tomac	063
2 Dean Wilson	062
3 Tyla Rattray	060
4 Cole Seely	047
5 Zach Osborne	047



WHO'S COUNTING?...

By Steve Cox

There are two ways to look at statistics like the one I'm about to present to you: 1) Take it as the new law of the universe; or 2) Figure that it's about time this particular stat ends its run.

The statistic I'm talking about is - for the last nine years - the racer who has won round three of the Monster Energy/AMA Supercross Championship has gone on to win the title.

Now, on the surface, this seems like an impossible stat. But let's look at it a little bit closer, shall we?

The first year of this nine-year run was 2003. That's square in the middle of the Ricky Carmichael era. He won a ton of races every season, so him winning round three isn't that weird. Then, in 2004, Carmichael was hurt, and that more or less left the guy who actually won more races than Carmichael in 2003 - Chad Reed. Reed took nine rounds in 2004 on his way to the title.

In 2005, Ricky Carmichael was back. In addition, James Stewart - in his rookie season in the premier division - knocked himself out of the championship at round two with a broken arm in Phoenix. So there you go, round three RC.

In 2006, it was RC's final full season of racing, and it's known as one of the greatest in supercross history, with the three top racers - Ricky Carmichael, Chad Reed and James Stewart - heading into the finale in Las Vegas all with a very realistic shot at the title. In the end, Carmichael took it by two points over a tie for second place between Reed and Stewart. But round three? Yeah, Carmichael won that. It was actually his second win of the campaign because he owned round two, too.

The next year, 2007, was the most consistent and dominant year in James Stewart's supercross career. He won 13 of the 16 AMA Supercross rounds. His worst finish was fifth in San Diego, and the other two non-wins were second-places... And yes, among those 13, was round three. But when you win 13 of 16, odds are there. Chad Reed dominated 2008 after Stewart eliminated himself from the chase with an injury after only two rounds. Reed again won nine main events that season on his way to the title. The 2009 championship also fell to Stewart. Yes, he won round three, but it was his second win of the title chase, and he ended up winning 11 rounds. Then comes 2010, where Ryan Dungey emerged as a 450 threat. Round three fell to Dungey, but so did round two in Phoenix. Reed dropped out of the title dispute after two rounds, and Stewart after three with a fractured wrist...

And last year, Ryan Villopoto was on a tear, and he took down the first ever Los Angeles Supercross in Dodger Stadium, which was round three, on his way to a term of perfection.

If you look at all of these, what you really see are supreme racers - Chad Reed, James Stewart and Ricky Carmichael - dominating, sometimes in the absence of other members of that trio. Then you see the emergence of the 'Ryans'. It's a weird stat but it doesn't necessarily mean that Chad Reed will win the 2012 title just because he filled the 'round three prophecy'.

However, there's another pattern here that you may or may not have noticed: Chad Reed wins the title every four years. He won in 2004 and 2008. It's 2012. Plus, he has that 'third race' in his pocket. Maybe he's just due.



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CATCH ME IF YOU CAN...

(...WITH ONLY THREE YEARS TO DO IT)

By Adam Wheeler, photos by Ray Archer, assistance by Juan Pablo Acevedo

We have been waiting over an hour for Ryan Villopoto to finish his promo slot for a mainstream car magazine and when the rider who devoured everything there was on a plate in 2011 does wander over it is with the minimum of fuss. As the sun starts to dip in the only way it can in California the isolated bungalow Menifee residence used by the Villopotos is bathed in red-yellow light and the private basketball court (a strange addition to the property for a 23 year old who barely stands at 5ft 9" and who admits he doesn't follow the game professionally) is too good a chance to miss for some photography. Towards the back of the house is the obligatory personal SX track, that a passing Jake Weimer informs us that the duo use when it has been raining 'because it drains better' than the Kawasaki test layout, twenty minutes up the road.

Villopoto comes across as a no-nonsense kinda guy; he is serious and direct to the point, pretty much like his ruthlessly effective combination with the Monster Energy Kawasaki.

Ryan seems to bear the weight of the demands that a full AMA Supercross and motocross season (flat out from January to September) takes on him personally but he is only too conscious of the viciousness of the sport that once forced him to the sidelines for the better part of an entire season when he broke his right tibia and fibula at St Louis in 2010.

Quietly spoken and friendly without being overtly gregarious, 'RV' gives us all the time we need until the evening has arrived and we leave the champ to start thinking about Dodger Stadium...

So what did you do with the Monster million?

Nothing yet! I make a good salary now and it just goes in the bank. I don't plan on racing until I am 30 or anything like that. In fact I plan on getting out fairly soon. My goal right now – and it is not a set goal – is doing this year and then another three. We'll see what happens when that time is up but I'm saving as much as I can now to have a good retirement. Monster asked me to do that race [the Monster Energy Cup in October] and thankfully it worked out in my favour.

Some people might say that to stop in three years seems crazily early...

Well if you look at it another way in three years I will have done a decade racing at the top in supercross. The people that will sit there and say 'it is too early' are those who have not been put in a situation, mentally, where they are pushing for championships. That's where it gets tough and perhaps where your career gets cut short because going for championships is totally different compared to lining up in the gate and looking at fifth place or a top ten; mentally it is not the same. Maybe some people also don't fully realise the sacrifices and the scale of the whole physical commitment. We get little time to ourselves or to actually try different things or go on vacation. In our sport we have to stay on the bike and in good physical shape otherwise...that's how you get hurt.

Can you give an example of the sacrifices you make?

I do something every day of the week, even on a relaxed day there will still be a small workout. It is a seven day a week job until the off-season where I will get around ten days from the whole year of not riding the bike or doing anything. 10 from 365 is not much...

No! Obviously the bulk is working out, riding and cycling and it is a lot to juggle. For that I've hired the best trainer [South African Aldon Baker, who has worked with Ricky Carmichael, James Stewart and Ben Townley among others] to take the guessing work out of it for me. I'm still the one who has to do it though.

At the Monster Cup in Vegas last October you had the air of a guy that had had enough. After a full season there wasn't much time before you had to prepare fully for this one...

There wasn't much time but not just for me, also for the guys in the team. I think something has to give and the only way that can happen is by cutting down some of the supercross races and getting it to fourteen rounds and also the outdoors down to ten. It will create more of an off-season and starting supercross at the end of January will also make more of a holiday period. It will make a huge difference. I haven't really talked to anyone about this. It is just my feeling but it seems from a few comments here and there that the view is becoming a trend.





“If I wake up tomorrow and feel like I am done then I can walk away knowing I have had everything there was to win...”



Watch Ryan at home in 2010

VIDEO





Tell me about the psyche of having that number one plate...

It takes the pressure off because now I know I have one [a championship]. If I wake up tomorrow and feel like I am done I can walk away knowing I have had everything that there was to win. It's a nice feeling but I am still in it for winning, and this means there is little pressure from another place and that is to keep that number one plate.

You focus on your own riding and preparation but surely being a great racer also means keeping a watch on the competition and you have some tough rivals again this year...

Yeah, I think our sport has changed in the last two to three years because in the past there were only two guys who could win the championship – unless they got hurt. It seems like there has never been five guys who could do it. I don't think we are head over heels better than the competition any more. It is closer and that makes for great racing.

Can you explain why that is?

I don't know. Maybe more guys are figuring out that is really takes hard work and it is not a matter of getting out on the bike and being lucky.

Are you comfortable with your profile and status now?

I wouldn't say it has changed that much in

terms of attention from fans or demands from the media. It has pretty much been like it is now for a while now. It is always crazy around Anaheim one and this time of the year.

Just a word about the Kawasaki. You seem to have such a good synergy with the KX450F...

was there anything you wanted for 2012?

We got some more power out of the engine, which is good and we always work on the suspension regardless. We had a good set-up for the Monster Cup and we just improved on that. What we have now is not that much different to what we had in October actually. We can't really change anything on the chassis because of the rules. Most of the work is on the suspension and the motor and I'm happy.

Does the opening ceremonies and build-up of the supercross still give you goose bumps?

It does. Our stadiums hold around 40-50,000 people and when they sell those out it is pretty cool.

Is there something else on the horizon that you are looking towards that doesn't involve a bike?

Not right now, no. If you look at our careers compared to other sports it is short. Against basketball, football and baseball or even Nascar or any car series...we don't have long. We have to live it right now and when the time comes we can do something else with our lives. It is tough but it's fun.

FACTORY HONDA WORLD MX PREPPING 2012

Temperate and accommodating in the depths of a European winter Sardinia has become the fashionable location of choice for some of the fastest Grand Prix riders to embark on their bike fitness and testing ahead of the coming season. KTM, Yamaha and the works Honda World Motocross team have all been pounding the laps across the Italian island.

For the Honda crew the build-up for 2012 is vitally important, considering the emergence of Russian Evgeny Bobryshev as a GP winner and team-mate Rui Goncalves maturation as a viable podium contender. The Italian crew also have to concentrate on development of the new CRF450F that boasts a fresh engine configuration and ushers in another dawn of performance potential for the world's largest motorcycle manufacturer. "We have been doing a lot of work on the bikes because everything is new," says Team Manager Lorenzo Resta.

"We received the bikes every early and I have to say the technical staff in Japan have done an amazing job. We made a long test in Japan

in October to tailor the bikes for each rider and then the revised models arrived before the end of the year. Rui and Bobby made two weeks of altitude training and are now riding in Sardinia."

Not a great deal is known about the prototype '13 CRF in terms of what it will present on the Grand Prix stage but, unsurprisingly, Honda are following their own ideas with regards to electronics. "The team has had a fantastic co-operation with GET [Italian electronics firm] but now we take different road and Japan want to develop an exclusive electronic system," confirms Resta.

Honda will join KTM and several other notable GP riders at the Mantova Starcross on February 19th but will not participate in the four round Italian Championship seemingly in part protest at the Italian Federation regulation for 2012 that juniors under fifteen must ride two-stroke machinery. Bobryshev will instead enter the Dutch national series for some vital sand practice ahead of GP1 at Valkenswaard on Easter weekend.

Resta with combative Russian rider Evgeny Bobryshev



GoPro HD HERO 2 OPENS UP NEW POSSIBILITIES

The phenomenon of recording experiences, getting behind a simple editing programme like Apple's iMovie and sharing them then online via Facebook and other platforms is now no longer the exclusive domain of adrenaline junkies.

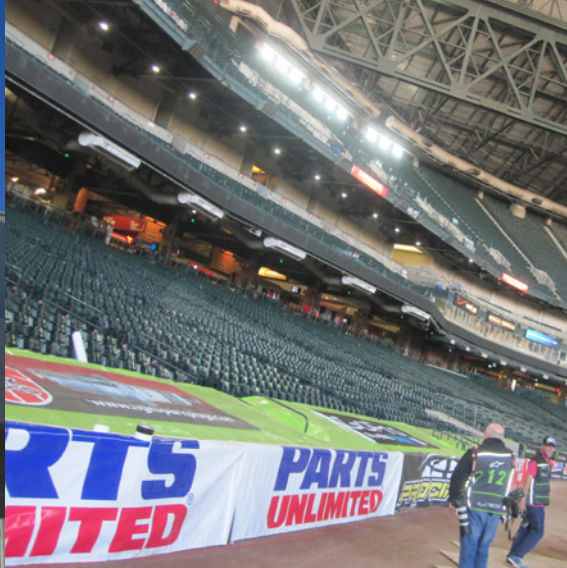
American company GoPro claimed towards the end of 2011 that they hoped to reach sales of 500,000 units of their encased and durable cameras. With the recent release of the GoPro 2 the Californian firm has provided a high definition camera twice as powerful as the original GoPro with improved audio and 1080p res, up from 720.

Although miniature cameras have existed before and there are other models on the market, the versatility of the GoPro product has led to

a surge towards a new trend. The Facebook site carries more than 1.5 million 'likes' and more than 92 million views of videos have taken place on GoPro's Youtube channel.

The sight of the cameras on helmets of James Stewart, Ryan Sipes, Kyle Chisholm and others has led to a fantastic perspective of the sport that is extremely eye-catching, dynamic and exciting. The public has never been able to get so close to Supercross. The FIM Motocross World Championship has already invested in the onboard helmet camera for live TV broadcast but there is room for more creativity in the wake of each meeting and GoPro could not only present Youthstream with another angle for their coverage but also be an avenue for teams and individual riders to showcase the explosiveness and thrill of their professions.





CROSSING THE DIVIDE...

By Adam Wheeler

After eleven years in the FIM Motocross World Championship a trip to digest the AMA Supercross experience was long overdue. Together with photographers Ray Archer and Juan Pablo Acevedo we sampled the sport first-hand in Arizona and then braved the unusual cold of Dodgers Stadium in Los Angeles.

For the six days in between we covered hundreds of miles around southern California visiting the homes of people like McGrath, Villopoto and Nicky Hayden as well as gaining the inside perspective on the likes of Kawasaki, KTM and new companies like 100%. The fruits of this labour and freeway pounding can be read in the pages of this magazine over the coming editions. Aside from a tireless familiarity with the desert topography of the State the biggest thing I'll take away from the nine days spent working in and around the industry in California is about how alluring the pull of Supercross can be.

When young prospering Grand Prix riders publicly declare their intent to depart European shores and conquer the U.S. scene it prompts a collective roll of the eyes among the Euro press corps. Somebody please fix the broken record. For the French, with their two decade love affair with Supercross firmly entrenched, this fixation is understandable.

I always knew what Supercross was about. The 'glitz and glamour' were part of the manufactured image of a manufactured sport; taking a natural form of racing and placing it in a large man-made structure. I'd seen the videos, watched footage of opening ceremonies, and been impressed by the teeming stadium tiers of public. The idea that this discipline was the peak of off-road motorcycle racing in terms of visibility, profile, money and prestige was accepted. But now I get it.

Perhaps I was fortunate to time my acquaintance with Supercross at a time when the barrel is particularly 'rich with apples'; talent aplenty, tension and unpredictability. The sport is by no means perfect. Ego driven, it can be over-the-top and is still insular at a time when it could really be spreading its wings in terms of international reach but the overriding sensation from the visits to Phoenix and LA is that there is something premier league about Supercross. It is a compact one-day 'hit' that boasts major audiences, downtown locations, supremely skilled athletes, a busy and well supported paddock and of course that element of the 'show' that sends shivers up the spine from the nine year old watching with his parents to the champion of the class as the fireworks start to pop and the lightshow begins.

At the route of this feeling is the knowledge that Supercross is as near to the mainstream as motocross racing will ever be. To see so many people cheering, shouting, (inexplicably) booing and thoroughly enjoying themselves provokes the realisation that the message is getting through; motocross is entertaining, barmy, brilliant and inspiring. American fans have known it for years, the industry cannot afford to be without Supercross and Grand Prix riders have for the most part become enamoured when they too set eyes on the scene.

Supercross is a big, juicy and lucrative carrot on a string. Just in the same way that a decent footballer wants to play for a Champions League club why wouldn't a fast and confident GP rider want a crack at it? At the moment who wouldn't want to watch it or be a part of it? For fear of preaching to the converted in Europe who are already major fans through an internet connection and a reliable alarm clock I'd suggest in any way possible to actually get to the stadium itself. You won't regret it.



ALL ABOUT THE BIKE

NICKY HAYDEN AND HIS MOTO LIFE...

By Adam Wheeler, photos by Ray Archer, assistance by Juan Pablo Acevedo

Nicky Hayden's Kentuckian drawl may sound out of place in the depths of California where the USA's last MotoGP World Champion has a west coast retreat (that he co-inhabits with his brothers when they are in town) but there is a hefty chunk of the 30 year old's character that could quintessentially be from this corner of the world. Friendly, outgoing and approachable are some familiar adjectives that have been thrown at the Ducati rider for almost ten years since he claimed practically all there was to win in the United States and made a new lifestyle of constant continent hopping as part of MotoGP. This is the personality that we found at his 'home' in Orange and in between laser sessions on the sofa to help with the recovery of his recently operated

wrist, Nicky is only too happy to pose for pics in his garage of toys (a 100,000 dollar AMG, several top of the range Specialized bicycles, off-road bikes and a curious Supermoto-engined road race machine) and talk about his life on the road.

The last few seasons have been lean and often harsh on Hayden, but his status in the motorcycle racing community is unblemished. He is a bona fide star who has trouble acting like one. Of all the interviews and work during a trip to California our time with the factory racer is the easiest to organise and done directly. For an individual who spends practically the whole year on race, test or PR duty this along is indicative of what a cool guy Hayden actually is...





What's the story with the place in Orange and how often are you in California?

Well, the winters in Kentucky are not so bad but it is not ideal weather for training and you can't do much riding, so in the past we used to stay with a mechanic I had who lived just down the road. I was based in a Honda team at the time that was local. My brothers also had teams in the area. A lot of the testing was done at the California Speedway, which is thirty minutes from here. Laguna Seca and Willow Springs are not massive distances away. We were staying out here and our friend had a few babies come along, there was no room for us anymore so we bought a condo up the road. The market was really good at that stage so we sold it and with the profit bought this place. It is definitely not home – Kentucky always will be – but it's nice to come out here in December, January, February to do some training; cycling, mountain biking, dirt-biking and for testing in Malaysia the trip to LAX is easy. There are also some events going on, last Saturday I did an AMG function in Santa Barbara. Once the season starts I won't be back much, perhaps before Laguna Seca. It is a low-key place and we don't have much here.

Has the whole existence on the road become a bit harder to do with the passing years?

No, If anything it's gotten easier because you know your way around, what to do and where to go. Of course I miss home and I have three little nieces now that I love to see and they are pretty awesome. You know, when I get home I get bored! This is the life I know and I've been travelling since I was an amateur. It is all I've done. It's gone quick and it doesn't feel like almost ten years. I'm not sick of it at all because I know how blessed I am to have this oppor-

tunity. Believe me there are people out there with a lot harder schedules than what I've had. I love it now as much as I ever did. I enjoy it more because I realise that it is not going to be a lot longer that I do it. I feel more comfortable in Europe now and spend more time there during the season than ever before.

So where are you based when in Europe?

Now I spend a lot more time in Italy. I love it there. Riding for Ducati and being in Italy is good and bad! They like their bike there and it can work both for and against you. If we are not doing good then they want to know why but I get treated so well with some perks and upgrades and the people are passionate about that team and that bike and how we are doing. I'm in Bologna a bit and doing events around. It's not like I'm a rock star and need security when I'm out or anything!

'Adversity' seems to be a good word in describing your last few years in MotoGP through development and bad luck with a few injuries. Do you feel you are due a break?

Nah. I don't wanna cry any sad stories for anybody. Last year was really tough because we expected a lot after the last race of 2010 when me and Casey went 1-2 at Valencia at one stage. Of course I feel like I'd like to catch a break. I got hurt at Valencia last time in a crash that was not my fault and getting hurt in the off-season was tough but everyone's got a story, that's life. I'm pretty excited for 2012 with the new bike and we'll find out at the end of the month [for the first pre-season test in Malaysia]. I was in Bologna last week talking to the team and the engineers and they are probably more excited than I've ever seen them. It will be nice to have some fun this year and get a smile on my face.





You have a reputation for being very committed to what you do. Are there any compromises you have to make?

It's not really a compromise I just loving racing motorcycles and it's what I want to do. I will do anything possible to try and get the best results. To be a world champion and to be in MotoGP for ten years you have to be focussed and committed every day. You can't race on a Sunday and then goof-off. I enjoy what I do; getting up and going testing, visiting the factory, going into the wind tunnel...

Motocrossers are working throughout December and January on their base physical condition. Is it a similar schedule for you?

Yeah, once our season starts...there are eighteen races but we are testing in between races and there are things like PR appearances and you are flying around different countries. There is not a lot of time to work on that base fitness and you don't want to be smoked at the weekend so December and January are the times when you are trying to make gains with your fitness and not just maintain it.

You are also an off-road fan...

I love motorcycles, off-road, on-road...anything. I like track and I like racing. I like to compete, even if it's against my brothers or whoever. I love road racing the most but I grew up flat tracking and I still follow it and do it for training. I'm a huge fan of supercross and motocross and I'm big friends with Ricky Carmichael and also Ernesto Fonseca. I trained together with Ricky a lot and he used to stay around the corner. We used to work with the same trainer.

So you have the luxury – especially here in California – of getting up each day and choosing which kind of bike to ride...

Pretty much. We can't train with our GP bike...I couldn't have one! But I believe riding any kind of motorbike is the best training. You can do as many push-ups as you want in the gym but there is nothing like using the muscles and the brain when you are on two wheels.

We've talked about the travelling and the training but what about the other side of your job away from the bike: the promotion work...

I don't really mind because, like you say, it is my job. I have contract obligations with so many days a year with various people but I love meeting bike fans. I don't think of it as hard work. Maybe when it is a week or days before a race then I'd want to be focussing on that than jumping on a train to go to an event somewhere but I realise it is my job and sponsors pay us to do both roles. I don't complain about it and try to be a Pro. If I am supposed to be somewhere then I show up on time with my shirt on and smile!

What about the view of some that MotoGP riders should be more proactive for the sport and for themselves? You seem to be one of those who is good about putting himself in the public eye...

I can't speak for other riders but I have a lot of fans that treat me good and support me a lot and I like to stay in touch with them and my sponsors. I don't think of it as being something too hard or something I can't handle. There are people back in Kentucky who do real work, and talking with you I don't consider that as something real hard!



WATCHMAN: HAYDEN ON HIS ROLE AS TISSOT AMBASSADOR

On how the association came about...

Tissot are quite involved in racing and MotoGP and it just kinda fit. The partnership has gotten a bit bigger and better every year and it is something that I am really proud of. It is not 'come-and-go'; it is pretty solid even with me changing manufacturers. I like that it offers something different to the fans because many people can get a hat or a shirt but a watch is a little bit unique.

On his role and involvement...

We did the world championship watch, only 69 of those, and they also let me be involved when it comes to picking out the colours and asking my feedback. Actually I'm really excited about the next watch coming up because I had more say-so and it turned out better than I expected. We'll see if the public likes it.

Prestige counts for something...

I'm a bit of a watch guy anyway and it's cool to be able to give your mechanics, friends and family a signature watch. I also really like the helmet case idea we came up with. A lot of people told me how they liked that part of it. Tissot is a great brand, worldwide. I've met the management and I'm proud to say they are my friends.

From talking with other people you seem to be heading for a legacy of being a good all-round rider and all-round good guy...

Of course I'd rather be remembered as a good guy than a jerk! But I'd still like to win some more races and make a bigger mark on the track. Winning the world championship was big... but I'd like to be both; you can be fast and also a nice guy. You don't have to be a prick to be fast. As far as the riding goes well I was the last guy in America to win the dirt-track and the AMA Superbike championship in the same year and to the old school that is a pretty big deal. I do feel versatile. I've won supermoto, flat track, Superbike, Grands Prix and can hold my own off-road. I don't want to think too much in the future because I still feel like I have some good days ahead of me, some 'tread on the tyre'! I'm a motorcycle guy so I envisage being in the sport in some capacity. I feel like I am a lifer in this game. I have a few kids back home that I'm sponsoring along with my Dad, one of them, Jake Lewis, is coming up.... I don't feel like I'll be going anywhere when it comes time to stop.



INDIA IN DOUBT FOR '12 AS LORENZO TRIES TRACK

Outgoing MotoGP champion Jorge Lorenzo visited the Buddh International Circuit on the outskirts of New Delhi as part of a Yamaha promotional tour of Asia and admitted that the track had potential to be on the MotoGP calendar in the near future.

There had been rumours that the circuit could even come in as a late replacement for the Portuguese GP if the organizers of that race were unable to run the event planned for early May due to the country's financial crisis. That seems unlikely to happen now, with Carmelo Ezpeleta confirming at the Ducati launch in Italy that the calendar would just be reduced to 17 races if Estoril defaulted.

However all signs point to a possible place for an Indian visit in 2013, with Lorenzo left impressed after he lapped the new track on an R15.



WSB CHAMP CHECA GETS GP12 RIDE-OUT

With a testing ban on MotoGP riders still in place until the end of January, Ducati took its test team out to Jerez to perform the first shakedown on the new Desmosedici GP12. Joining Franco Battaini and Team Manager Vitoriano Guareschi was the 2011 World Superbike champ Carlos Checa.

At the Andalucian track for all three days of the test, the veteran Spaniard also got to ride his new 1198 in the cold but dry conditions and although he was prevented from commenting on the new GP bike, he did say that it felt good to recover the feelings on it whilst the team announced there were no problems with their checks.

MotoGP IN TWITTER: THE LAST TWO WEEKS...

@MotoGP Here's the provisional entry list for the 2012 MotoGP World Championship
The official site announces a provisional field of 21 for MotoGP. 12 factory bikes and 9 CRT machines.

@ValeYellow46 Oggi il Sic avrebbe compiuto 25 anni, stasera c'è una bella festa per ricordarlo al 105 stadium di Rimini con i ragazzi di Zelig
Valentino Rossi and thousands of fans celebrate what would have been Marco Simoncelli's 25th birthday in the 105 stadium at Rimini.

@AndreaDovizioso first day of training at the swimming pool. still i feel pain at shoulder but we have to start now to be ready for the first test session
Dovi begins his recovery in the pool after breaking his collarbone in an MX crash.

@lorenzo99 Hey guys! Although it sounds like a joke, i just pass the motorcycle theory test!! ;)
2010 MotoGP World Champion Jorge Lorenzo passes the theory part of his road motorcycle test!

@gavinemmett Theory test passed! ... Now to do the rest
OTOR correspondent Gavin Emmett passes the theory part of his road motorcycle test!

@SergioGadea Pero todos me piden dinero!!! El problema es que no tengo ese dinero y creo que es muy injusto tener que pagar por jugarte la vida
(Everyone's asking me for money to ride! The problem is I don't have it and I think it's unfair to have to pay to risk your life.) Sergio Gadea turns to social networking to help fund a ride for 2012

@JulesCluzel16 Bad news...
Having lost his Moto2 ride, Jules Cluzel announces the loss of his WSS ride through facebook.

@DucatiMotor Faster! Ducati riders adventure on the snow! Enjoy the video! <http://youtu.be/XWz2HZ2Dvk8>
Rossi and Hayden frolicking in the snow on a Desmosedici GP11 at Wrooom



@GinoRea Will definitely let you know when I have something official to release! :)
Gino Rea is announced on the Moto2 entry list, but he still can't confirm his ride with the Gresini team.

@67Shakey Bad day.. Was in a multi car pile up early am, survived that in the pitch black, got out of my van, then got knocked down by another car!!..
Former MotoGP rider Shakey Byrne involved in two accidents in the space of a few minutes and luckily escapes with just a badly bruised ankle

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ITALIAN JOB...

By Gavin Emmett

The week before last saw the annual Wroom event at Madonna di Campiglio in the Italian Dolomites, an annual media gathering for the presentation of the Ducati MotoGP and Ferrari Formula 1 teams.

Unfortunately there was a bit of a cloud hanging over the event this year after the respective performances of the two Italian squads in 2011.

Added to that, Nicky Hayden was having to deal with the after-effects of a training crash that had left him with broken shoulder-blade and ribs, whilst the radically re-designed Ducati Desmosedici GP12 was not even on display for the gathered press corps.

2012 is massive for Ducati with the championship having waved arrivederci to Suzuki at the end of last season they are now the only challengers to the big two of Honda and Yamaha. When they signed Valentino Rossi for last year it was with an expectation of surpassing anything they had achieved with Casey Stoner, but clearly, that didn't quite go to plan.

When the deal was first done, most commentators felt that both parties had something to lose if things went pear-shaped, but reflecting on that sentiment over a year on, I'm not so sure any more.

Despite having still conquered the World Superbike crown without a 'factory' effort, the rules in that series are set to be skewed away from Ducati this year, and they have now lumped all their eggs into the MotoGP basket. You just have to look at the amount of development done during 2011 as testament to the single-mindedness of their efforts. Meanwhile the PR machine of Valentino Rossi

Rossi is still in a win-win situation with Ducati...

has no mechanical worries whatsoever. He was in bullish mood at Wrooom and is confident that the demands placed on the factory by himself, his crew and the team sponsors will come to fruition.

If that doesn't materialise however, in my opinion Rossi is still in a win-win situation. His legacy as a multi-World Champion and sporting icon is set in stone and if he gets the new bike to work from this "no-hope" position, it will only cement his legend. If not, Ducati will bear the brunt of not being able to provide said legend with the tool to take on the world, and may not have an SBK championship to fall back on.

AMA-SX

PHOENIX

CHASE FIELD · JANUARY 14TH · Rnd 2 of 17

Supercross winner: Ryan Dungey, KTM

SX Lites East/West winner: Dean Wilson, Kawasaki

DUNGEY HITS THE MARK EARLY

By Adam Wheeler, photos by Ray Archer





On the track walk around the murky enclosures of Chase Field (the giant window panels were fully open but the undeniably impressive fourteen year old Baseball stadium was still a dark setting) the talk was about how the reins – and the gloves – would be off. The nerves of Anaheim ‘one’ and the series opener the previous week would have dissipated.

On an evening when Ryan Dungey would make history for KTM with a gate-to-flag victory and 2011 250 Motocross Champion Dean Wilson would also runaway with the Lites it was the incidents to James Stewart and Ryan Villopoto – the two fastest riders around the slick layout – that indicated this seventeen race series would, in fact, be a stretch of pressure and tension all the way to Vegas in May. Both riders hit the dirt, Villopoto hindered by Davi Millsaps and Stewart slipping out through the sand, and this gave Dungey room to place his name in KTM’s illustrious racing annals. The fallers provided the focus of the main event with Villopoto’s emphatic charge to third and Stewart putting all on the line after a poor start but it was Dungey who inherited co-ownership of the red plate and starting to count championship points.

“It was earlier than I expected but it was a big step [to win] and good confirmation that we are moving in the right direction,” he said afterwards to OTOR. “It was a momentum-booster and to let people know that we are working hard and that it will pay off in the long-run.”





RV earned his cash and then some to fight back to third position. The points lost to Dungey meant that he would share red plate billing in LA





Dean Wilson admitted that he wasn't on the ball at Anaheim but there was no-one to challenge his speed in Arizona

Marvin Musquin was a teenage genius at Supercross in Europe and finally bagged his first AMA podium with second place. A good evening indeed for KTM









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'On-track Off-road' is a free, bi-weekly publication for the screen focused on bringing the latest perspectives on events, blogs and some of the very finest photography from the three worlds of the FIM Motocross World Championship, the AMA Motocross and Supercross series' and MotoGP. 'On-track Off-road' will be published online at www.ontrackoffroad.com every other Tuesday. To receive an email notification that a new issue available with a brief description of each edition's contents simply enter an address in the box provided on the homepage. All email addresses will be kept strictly confidential and only used for purposes connected with OTOR.

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